



PRESS RELEASE

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Governor Snyder Declares Foster Grandparent Volunteer Day

Thumb Area, MI - Older adults are rethinking retirement through volunteerism, and the State of Michigan is taking notice. One of the ways older adults are volunteering is through the Foster Grandparent Program. Governor Rick Snyder is acknowledging the efforts of the Foster Grandparent Program and has declared January 20, 2016 Foster Grandparent Volunteer Day in Michigan.

In the Thumb Area, Human Development Commission has placed 46 Foster Grandparent volunteers in local schools; including pre-school, head start centers, and intermediate school districts. The local Foster Grandparent volunteers have been assigned 67 different students to focus their time and attention on. "We predict that all 67 students will show at least moderate improvement in literacy, math, and general academics including increased attendance and class participation," said Kristy Anderson, Manager of the Foster Grandparent Program. The Foster Grandparents are able to help achieve the improvement through one-on-one learning situations and extra attention to students who need it the most. While the volunteers focus their time on students with special or exceptional needs, they are truly "Grandma" or "Grandpa" to the entire school.

Students are not the only ones who benefit from the Foster Grandparent Program; volunteers also benefit through this intergenerational experience. After retirement seniors are more likely to become isolated, lonely, and even depressed. The Foster Grandparent Program encourages seniors to be more active, have increased social ties, and find a purpose in what they are doing. The volunteers are able to see the achievement in the students and hear kind words from students as they build relationships within the school.

The Human Development Commission has sponsored the Thumb Area Foster Grandparent Program since 1978. There are currently openings for new volunteers to join the program. Volunteers meeting income guidelines will receive a small stipend and travel reimbursement related to volunteering. For more information, call Human Development Commission at 1-800-843-6394.

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Foster Grandparents Marge Pijanowski and Bella Gonzales enjoying each other's company in between school years.